



LOEP UPDATE

October—November 2000 ISSUE

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Swamp Fires: St. James and St. John

Residents of St. John the Baptist and St. James Parishes were subjected to noxious fumes and choking smoke for several days during late October and early November. Smoldering brush and dry organic matter in the swamp bordering both parishes burned out of control for nearly a week before parish and Louisiana Army National Guard earth moving equipment were brought in to contain the smoldering swamp fires that ultimately consumed over a thousand acres.

A joint effort between parish OEP Directors Gerald Falgoust (St. James) and Bertram Madere (St. John) brought in parish assets such as the earth movers, all-terrain four-wheelers, PTO driven water pumps and St. John's mobile incident command station. LOEP provided ground and air support coordination between the parishes and the National Guard citizen soldiers called in to help out. Aerial reconnaissance support was provided by the LA Department of Forestry.

Three Army helicopters with 500 gallon water drop buckets were also requested to help extinguish flare-ups. A firebreak (constructed by as many as seven parish and Army bull-dozers) surrounding the smoldering swamp was completed on November 2. At that time a decision was made to pull the earth movers out and allow the helicopters room to dump thousands of gallons of water into the contained area.

Irrigation ditches were then dug leading from local canals to the contained area. Nearby plants (LaRoche and Kaiser Aluminum) used massive high volume water pumps to help flood the drainage canals leading into the marsh area. It was estimated that at one point plant and parish pumps were moving water at the rate of 8,000 gallons per minute.

With the swamp receiving such a huge volume of water, everything was under control by the weekend. The situation could have been much worse without the combined efforts of parish, state and military personnel.

Stafford Act Changes Become Public Law 106-390

The cite for HR707 is Pre-disaster mitigation (streamlines the administration of disaster relief, to control the Federal costs of disaster assistance): Cite as P.L. 106-390, 114 Stat. 1552.

On Friday, November 3, the NEMA leadership and appropriate committee chairs held conference calls with the FEMA Response & Recovery Directorate and Mitigation Directorate to discuss NEMA input into policy and regulatory changes necessitated by the Stafford Act Amendments. Both Directorates agreed to work closely with a NEMA Stafford Act working group that is being established with representatives from mitigation, response & recovery and legislative committees.

Changes to the Stafford Act will affect many different aspects of emergency management and should be reviewed by all emergency managers. More information to follow as it becomes available.

Residential Care Ordinance

A proposed ordinance currently under debate in St. Bernard Parish affects all Residential Care Homes or Facilities. The ordinance is intended to protect citizens residing in these facilities by requiring the owners to apply for permits and ensure that the dwelling meet certain health and safety guidelines as set by the Department of Health and Hospitals and other agencies.

"This ordinance will set a precedence for the community. We need to make sure that these dwellings meet the standards set by health and safety departments in order to protect our citizens" said Bob Bracamontes, St. Bernard Parish OEP Director.

For more information about this ordinance, call Mr. Bracamontes at (504) 278-4267.



One of three Louisiana Army National Guard Black-Hawk helicopter fills a 500 gallon water drop bucket from nearby Mississippi River.



A swamp resident gets a lift out of the acrid smoke by a local sheriff's deputy. The 5 to 6 foot long gator was later released into a nearby bayou.

LOEP Chooses E-Team Software for EOC

After many months of evaluating and decision making, LOEP has decided to transition from our current Emergency Incident Tracking software (EM/2000) to E-Team.

The primary difference will be how this software will be accessed. The E-Team Incident Tracking package will reside on an agency web-server thereby all clients will simply point their web browser to a simple Internet address.

The new package will save both time and money. We will no longer have to travel to remote areas of the state to install or configure a Lotus Notes client. Money will be saved since the system is accessible through the Internet; no long distance phone calls will be required. One log-in ID and password will be issued to each parish and state agency.

More to come as this project moves through the final stages of acquisition and installation.

Emergency Declarations

Ouachita Parish 7/14/00—The community water wells in Froggy Bottom failed due to a drop in the water table. The declaration was extended in Aug, Sept. and Oct.

St. James/St. John 10/30/00—St. James and St. John parishes declared a local state of emergency on 10/26/00 due to a swamp fire that was burning out of control. A governor's declaration was approved. The EPA, USCOE, and State Agencies approved an action plan to extinguish the fire. Crews from both parishes, along with crews from the National Guard worked to complete the plan. The situation was resolved by 11/05/00.



A track-hoe makes its way through a wooded area in Assumption Parish to contain smoldering brush fires before they had gotten out of control.

FFY-2001 LOEP Training Schedule

The LOEP Training section recently published its FFY-2001 Training Schedule. In case you missed it, here are the course offerings and dates. Make room in your schedule to attend some of these informative emergency management courses. More information can be found on our website at www.loep.state.la.us as are the course applications or contact LOEP's Training section.

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Course Title	Location	Date
Exercise Design & Exercise Evaluation	Baton Rouge	January 9-11, 2001
Mass Fatalities Incident Response	Houma	January 23-25, 2001
VOAD Conference/Developing Volunteer Resources	Alexandria	January 29-31, 2001
Emergency Management Overview For New Directors	Baton Rouge	February 7, 2001
EOC Operations & Resource Management	Alexandria	February 13-15, 2001
Writing Grant Proposals	Lafayette	March 6-8, 2001
Disaster Response & Recovery Operations III (DRRO III)	Shreveport	March 14-15, 2001
Leadership Decision Making	Lafayette	March 27-30, 2001
Disaster Response & Recovery Operations III (DRRO III)	Lake Charles	April 10-11, 2001
Effective Communications & Basic PIO	Alexandria	April 24-27, 2001
Hurricane Planning	Baton Rouge	May 15-16, 2001
LEPA Workshop (Registration through LEPA)	Monroe, LA	May 21-24, 2001
Hazardous Weather and Flood Preparedness	Covington	July 10-11, 2001
Emergency Planning	Baton Rouge	July 24-26, 2001
LOEP EMPG Workshop	Lafayette	August 8-9, 2001
Impact of Environmental & Historic Compliance Issues on D. Recovery	Baton Rouge	August 14, 2001
Hazardous Weather and Flood Preparedness	Shreveport	August 21-22, 2001



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Upcoming Holidays—LOEP Office CLOSED

THANKSGIVINGNOVEMBER 23RD, 2000

ACADIAN DAYNOVEMBER 24TH, 2000

CHRISTMASDECEMBER 25TH, 2000

NEW YEARS DAYJANUARY 1ST, 2001

*The 24-hour Communications Operator will be on duty.

WE'RE ON THE WEB

www.loep.state.la.us

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